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Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 06978 271313Z

53
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 OES-03 ACDA-05 IO-10 EB-07 NRC-05

FEAE-00 ERDA-05 COME-00 TRSE-00 /104 W
---------- 074119
R 271206Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8894
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
ZEN AMCONSUL BOMBAY BY POUCH
ZEN AMCONSUL CALCUTTA BY POUCH
ZEN AMCONSUL MADRAS BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6978

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, IN, UR
SUBJ: INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

SUMMARY--A SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER IN DELHI HAS TOLD US THAT PRIME MINISTER GANDHI DECLINED AN INVITATION TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE INDO-SOVIET SATELLITE. THE SOVIET OFFICER ALSO INDICATED THAT HIS EMBASSY HAD "TONED DOWN" THE INDIAN SUGGESTIONS FOR THE JOINT COM-MUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO'S VISIT IN FEBRUARY. THE OFFICER FORESAW CONTINUED GOOD INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS EVEN IF THERE WERE FUTURE CHANGES AT THE TOP IN THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

1. A SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER MAY 26 THAT PRIME MINISTER GANDHI WAS INVITED TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE INDO-SOVIET SATELLITE ARYABHATA APRIL 19 BUT DECLINED APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC POLITICS AND THE GUJARAT ELECTION ISSUE. THE SOVIET OFFICER (COUNSELOR-LEVEL) MADE NO PRETENSE OF HIS, AND PRESUMABLY
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 06978 271313Z

HIS GOVERNMENT'S DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MRS. GANDHI HAS LET

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

SLIP BY ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION.
(WE NOTE THAT INDIAN AMBASSADOR D.P. DHAR HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR STOESSEL IN MOSCOW APRIL 8 THAT HE FELT MRS. GANDHI MIGHT PAY A VISIT IN MAY).

2. DURING A DISCUSSION OF DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO'S LATE FEBRUARY VISIT, THE SOVIET OFFICER INDICATED THAT GOI HAD PROPOSED A LONG LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR TREATMENT IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE AS WELL AS A HARSH STATEMENT CRITICAL OF THE U.S. LIFTING OF THE SOUTH ASIAN ARMS EMBARGO. HE SAID THE PROPOSED INDIAN WORDING OF THE LATTER COULD EVEN HAVE BEEN CONSTRUED BY SOME AS A CRITICISM OF THE U.S. FOR PAK-AFGHANI TENSION. AS THE SOVIET OFFICER EXPLAINED ITS, HIS EMBASSY "TONED DOWN" THE INDIAN SUGGESTIONS AND INSISTED ON A SUMMARY COMMUNIQUE, "REMINDING" THE INDIANS THAT GRECHKO WAS NOT THE SOVIET PRIME MINISTER. (COMMENT-THE SOVIET'S EXPLANATION IS UNABASHEDLY SELF-SERVING BUT IT DOES TALLY SOMEWHAT WITH COMMENTS MADE BY HIM IN EARLY APRIL TO A BRITISH DIPLOMAT HERE. ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH THE SOVIET COUNSELOR SAID HE WAS INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATING THE COMMUNIQUE HAD HAD TOLD THE INDIANS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED A NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT, MAINLY BECAUSE IT WAS FELT THAT A MILITARY VISIT SHOULD NOT YIELD A HIGHLY POLITICAL COMMUNIQUE. THE BRITISH CONCLUDED THAT THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY WAS DETERMINED NOT TO LET GRECHKO LEAVE INDIA WITH A COMMUNIQUE WHICH MIGHT RIVAL THE HIGH-BLOWN RHETORIC OF THE BREZHNEV-GANDHI DECLARATION OF NOVEMBER 1973. END COMMENT).

3. THE SOVIET OFFICER WAS ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN INDIA, AND HOW INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS MIGHT LOOK IF BREZHNEV SHOULD RETIRE AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS. FOR THE SOVIET'S CONSIDERATION IT WAS OBSERVED THAT PARTY LEADERS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH BREZHNEV SEEMED TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL SOVIET VISITS TO INDIA, LIKE KUNAYEV TO THE 1971 CPI CONGRESS AND RASHIDOV TO THE CPI 1975 CONGRESS. THE SOVIET OFFICER RESPONDED BY SAYING IT WAS TRUE THE GENERAL SECRETARY HAD A "PERSONAL AFFECTION" FOR INDIA BUT OTHERS HAD ALSO VISITED HERE, PELSHE AND MAZUROV FOR EXAMPLE.
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KOSYGIN HAD BEEN HERE FOUR OR FIVE TIMES. "EVEN GROMYKO WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO COME TO INDIA BUT PREFERS TO TRAVEL WEST" HAS BEEN TO INDIA THREE TIMES. THE SOVIET NOT SURPRISINGLY CONCLUDED THAT GOOD INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE WHATEVER THE FUTURE MIGHT BRING.

4. AMBASSADOR MALTSEV LEFT NEW DELHI MAY 27 FOR ROUTINE

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CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW. THE SOVIET AND INDIAN DELEGATIONS CONTINUE THEIR NEGOTIATIONS HERE ON A NEW FIVE-YEAR TRADE AGREEMENT COVERING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 1976. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE TWO SIDES AGREED MAY 26 TO DOUBLE THE VOLUME OF TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BY 1980. WE WILL REPORT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THEIR CONCLUSION.
SCHNEIDER

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